

EMANUEL LIBMAN

1872-1946

Dr. Emanuel Libman passed away at the Mount Sinai Hospital on June 28, 1946, after a brief illness. Throughout his professional career he had devoted himself whole-heartedly to medical science and research, to medical practice of a high order, to the study of medical literature, to medical education and to promoting in others those ideals which had inspired his own life.

Libman was born on August 22, 1872, in New York City; he was graduated from the College of the City of New York with the degree of A.B. in 1891, and from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University in 1894. During his internship at the Mount Sinai Hospital he came under the influence of Dr. Abraham Jacobi and Dr. Henry Koplik, and at first planned to become a pediatrician. With this in mind he made a trip to Europe and studied bacteriology in Graz under Theodore Escherich who had discovered the colon bacillus. In only a few weeks' work in Professor Escherich's laboratory, he discovered the *Streptococcus enteritis*, and isolated this streptococcus from the patient's blood. This initial experimental research may account for Libman's subsequent extensive work in blood cultures, in the "General Infections," and in bacterial endocarditis. On his return to New York he was appointed assistant pathologist at the Mount Sinai Hospital, and from that time played a most important and vital role in the development of its laboratories, both routine and research.

In medical history his name will probably always be associated with endocarditis in general, with the bacteria-free stage of endocarditis and with his description with Dr. Benjamin Sacks of a new form of endocarditis which he called atypical verrucous endocarditis, now termed the Libman-Sacks disease.

Notable as were his achievements in bacteriology and pathology, he will be remembered by many physicians for his extraordinary knowledge of internal medicine

and its literature, and his brilliance as a diagnostician. He had come under the influence of three great internists, Dr. Francis Delafield, Dr. Edward Gamaliel Janeway and Dr. William Osler, and at least some of his success was due to their fine example and teaching.

Important as his work was in the laboratory and at the bedside, of equal value were his interest and promotion of postgraduate medical education of others, especially of younger physicians. The outstanding characteristic of Libman was his ability to stimulate, to inspire, to quicken others to work and study with something of his own enthusiasm. He was instrumental in getting the initial funds for the work of the Committee on Medical Education at his hospital. He either himself endowed or helped in the establishment of the following funds, all for medical education or research:—the Edward Gamaliel Janeway Lectureship, the William Henry Welch Lectureship, a lectureship in honor of Hideyo Noguchi at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Humphrey Davy Rolleston Lectureship at The Royal College of Physicians in London, the Herbert Celler Fellowship Fund, and the Henry Dazian Foundation for Medical Research. The latter during the recent war provided fellowships for Latin-American doctors wishing to pursue research in this country. He was a great friend of, and liberal contributor to the Hebrew University in Palestine. It is not so well known that he left a contingent legacy in his will for the Tuskegee Institute of Alabama, probably as an expression of his own belief that "mankind should treat all races as one." The Libman Fellowship Fund was established by a number of his friends as a tribute to Libman for his work in postgraduate medical education.

He always enjoyed working at the Academy of Medicine. He was a leading spirit in the activities of the Committee on Medical Education of The New York Academy of Medicine from its incipency to the last

year of his life when he reluctantly withdrew because of his failing health. The Graduate Fortnights, originally suggested by Dr. Ludwig Kast, were always a challenge to him, and their success year after year was a source of great satisfaction, as he considered them a valuable means of teaching. He was one of the first, if not the first to form a group who demonstrated exhibits over and over again to successive audiences. The most perfect tribute to Libman, but necessarily incomplete, is the "Introduction" to the three Libman Anniversary Volumes, by his great friend, William H. Welch. In that introduction Dr. Welch writes: "An almost unsurpassed gift of Libman as a teacher is his skill in collecting material and in preparing exhibits of specimens and illustrations for his lectures and demonstrations. Many of his appearances, accompanied often by a group of his pupils to present a paper or exhibit at a meeting of medical societies or at international congresses have been notable events, never forgotten by the hearers. I doubt if there has ever before been assembled such an instructive and comprehensive exhibit of the cardiovascular system in all its aspects, ana-

tomical, physiological, pathological, bacteriological and clinical, as that brought together under the supervision of Libman to illustrate the course of lectures and demonstrations of the Graduate Fortnight of the New York Academy of Medicine in October, 1931.

In addition to his formal work in medical education, he was tireless in his efforts to help younger physicians and scientists by his sound advice, his stimulation and his financial aid. As a result he built up a school of disciples and gathered a host of personal friends both here and abroad with whom he kept in touch to the end of his life.

Libman belonged to an age which is passing, but he saw clearly the age that is waiting before, and prepared others to meet the burden of the future. He was a scholar, an investigator, a fine physician and a philanthropist. He preached and practised the continued education of the physician throughout his own long and brilliant career in medicine. We who knew him will always cherish his memory.

BERNARD S. OPPENHEIMER.